

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2874

To provide for a program under which postal benefits shall be made available for purposes of certain personal correspondence and other mail matter sent from within the United States to members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in military operations abroad, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 14, 2005

Mr. FORD (for himself, Mr. SHIMKUS, Mr. GORDON, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. BARROW, Mrs. MCCARTHY, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. WOOLSEY, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, Mr. BERRY, Mr. SMITH of Washington, and Mr. HIGGINS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To provide for a program under which postal benefits shall be made available for purposes of certain personal correspondence and other mail matter sent from within the United States to members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in military operations abroad, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Supply Our Soldiers
3 Act of 2005”.

4 **SEC. 2. POSTAL BENEFITS PROGRAM.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—The United States Postal Service
6 and the Secretary of Defense shall provide for a program
7 under which postal benefits shall be made available to the
8 designated representative of each qualified individual in
9 accordance with succeeding provisions of this Act.

10 (b) QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.—For pur-
11 poses of this Act, the term “qualified individual” means
12 an individual who is—

13 (1)(A) a member of the Armed Forces of the
14 United States on active duty (as defined in section
15 101 of title 10, United States Code) or a civilian
16 who is authorized to use postal services at Armed
17 Forces installations and holds a position or performs
18 one or more functions in support of military oper-
19 ations, as designated by the military theater com-
20 mander; and

21 (B) serving in an overseas area, as designated
22 by the President, where the Armed Forces of the
23 United States are engaged in action against an
24 enemy of the United States, engaged in military op-
25 erations involving armed conflict with a hostile for-
26 eign force, engaged in temporary military operations

1 under arduous circumstances, serving with a friendly
2 foreign force in an armed conflict in which the
3 United States is not a belligerent, or temporarily de-
4 ployed overseas for an operational contingency in ar-
5 duous circumstances, as determined by the Secretary
6 of Defense; or

7 (2) hospitalized in a facility of the Armed
8 Forces of the United States as a result of disease or
9 injury incurred as a result of service in an overseas
10 area designated by the President under paragraph
11 (1)(B).

12 (c) POSTAL BENEFITS DESCRIBED.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The postal benefits made
14 available to a designated representative pursuant to
15 this Act shall consist of postage stamps (of such de-
16 nomination or denominations as the Postal Service
17 may determine) equivalent to \$150 in value per cal-
18 endar quarter, subject to subsection (d)(2)(B).

19 (2) CONDITIONS RELATING TO MAILINGS.—
20 Postal benefits under this Act may not be used for
21 the mailing of any mail matter other than mail mat-
22 ter which—

23 (A) is described in paragraph (3);

24 (B) is sent—

1 (i) from within an area served by a
2 United States post office; and

3 (ii) by an individual or a charitable
4 organization; and

5 (C) is addressed to a qualified individual.

6 (3) MAIL MATTER DESCRIBED.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—The mail matter de-
8 scribed in this paragraph is—

9 (i) any letter mail or sound- or video-
10 recorded communications having the char-
11 acter of personal correspondence; and

12 (ii) any parcel not exceeding—

13 (I) 10 pounds in weight and 60
14 inches in length and girth combined,
15 if sent by an individual; or

16 (II) 70 pounds in weight and 108
17 inches in length and girth combined,
18 if sent by a charitable organization.

19 (B) RESTRICTION.—Postal benefits under
20 this Act may not be used for mail matter that
21 contains any advertising.

22 (4) DESIGN AND LIMITATIONS ON USE OF
23 STAMPS.—Stamps made available pursuant to this
24 Act—

1 (A) shall bear a design or other markings
2 to identify the military operation to which they
3 relate; and

4 (B) may not be used—

5 (i) after the date (following the con-
6 clusion of such military operation) des-
7 ignated by the Secretary of Defense; or

8 (ii) with respect to any other military
9 operation.

10 (5) COORDINATION RULE.—Postal benefits
11 under this Act shall be in addition to, and not in lieu
12 of, any reduced rates of postage or other similar
13 benefits which might otherwise be available by or
14 under law, including any rates of postage resulting
15 from the application of section 3401(b) of title 39,
16 United States Code.

17 (d) REGULATIONS.—The Postal Service and the Sec-
18 retary of Defense shall jointly prescribe any regulations
19 necessary to carry out this Act, including regulations to
20 provide for the following:

21 (1) IDENTIFICATION OF DESIGNATED REP-
22 RESENTATIVES.—The identification of designated
23 representatives shall be made using procedures
24 under which—

1 (A) determinations shall be made based on
2 the most current next-of-kin data available to
3 or obtainable by the Secretary of Defense; and

4 (B) a qualified individual may supersede a
5 determination under subparagraph (A), to the
6 extent procedures to carry out this subpara-
7 graph are practicable.

8 (2) NOTICE TO AND ELECTIONS BY DES-
9 IGNATED REPRESENTATIVES.—

10 (A) NOTICE.—Notice shall be provided to
11 all designated representatives informing them of
12 their eligibility for postal benefits under this
13 Act and the procedures (including any dead-
14 lines) for making an initial and any subsequent
15 election of benefits.

16 (B) ELECTIONS.—A designated represent-
17 ative shall not receive any postal benefits under
18 this Act for any calendar quarter except upon
19 the filing of an appropriate written election. A
20 separate election under this subparagraph shall
21 be required for each calendar quarter, and each
22 such election shall require the individual to in-
23 dicate whether full, partial (in the increments
24 allowed), or no benefits are requested for the
25 quarter. Failure to make an effective election

1 shall be treated as a declination of benefits for
2 the calendar quarter involved.

3 (C) NO CARRYOVER.—Any benefits de-
4 clined (in whole or in part) with respect to a
5 calendar quarter shall not be available for pur-
6 poses of any subsequent calendar quarter.

7 (e) DIRECT BENEFITS FOR CHARITABLE ORGANIZA-
8 TIONS.—In addition to the benefits under subsections (a)
9 through (d), the Postal Service and the Secretary of De-
10 fense shall by regulation allow any charitable organization
11 to apply for direct postal benefits. Applications for benefits
12 under this subsection shall be considered on a case-by-case
13 basis in accordance with such criteria as shall apply under
14 the regulations. Any benefits approved under this sub-
15 section shall be governed by subsection (c), subject to any
16 modifications or special rules established by the regula-
17 tions which may be necessary to carry out the purposes
18 of this subsection (including an alternative to the limita-
19 tion set forth in subsection (c)(1)).

20 (f) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this Act, the term
21 “charitable organization” means an organization that is
22 described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code
23 of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a)
24 of such Code.

1 **SEC. 3. FUNDING.**

2 There are authorized to be appropriated to the De-
3 partment of Defense each year a sum determined by the
4 Secretary of Defense to be equal to the expenses incurred
5 by the Department in providing the benefits described in
6 section 2(c) (including any payments or reimbursements
7 to the United States Postal Service under this Act), re-
8 duced or increased (as the case may be) by any amounts
9 by which the Secretary finds that a determination under
10 this section for a prior year was greater than or less than
11 the amounts finally determined for such year.

12 **SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

13 This Act shall take effect on the first day of the first
14 fiscal year beginning after the date of the enactment of
15 this Act.

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